

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

**EDNA P CIHLA**  
Claimant

**WHIRLPOOL CORPORATION**  
Employer

**APPEAL NO. 14A-UI-10067-GT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 12/22/13  
Claimant: Appellant (4)**

Iowa Code § 96.4-3 – Able and Available

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated September 15, 2014, reference 01, which held claimant not able and available for work. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on October 16, 2014. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Carrie Jaster, Human Resources Generalist.

**ISSUE:**

The issue in this matter is whether claimant is able and available for work.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant was not available for work beginning on August 31, 2014 due to undergoing a surgical procedure which resulted in a medical work restriction. Claimant has since returned to work effective October 13, 2014. She became able and available for work on that date.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

Iowa Code § 96.4-3 provides:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph 1, or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of section 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(1)a provides:

Benefits eligibility conditions. For an individual to be eligible to receive benefits the department must find that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. The individual bears the burden of establishing that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work.

(1) Able to work. An individual must be physically and mentally able to work in some gainful employment, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but which is engaged in by others as a means of livelihood.

a. Illness, injury or pregnancy. Each case is decided upon an individual basis, recognizing that various work opportunities present different physical requirements. A statement from a medical practitioner is considered prima facie evidence of the physical ability of the individual to perform the work required. A pregnant individual must meet the same criteria for determining ableness as do all other individuals.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(35) provides:

Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(35) Where the claimant is not able to work and is under the care of a physician and has not been released as being able to work.

To be able to work, "[a]n individual must be physically and mentally able to work in some gainful employment, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but which is engaged in by others as a means of livelihood." *Sierra v. Employment Appeal Board*, 508 N.W.2d 719, 721 (Iowa 1993); *Geiken v. Lutheran Home for the Aged*, 468 N.W.2d 223 (Iowa 1991); Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(1). "An evaluation of an individual's ability to work for the purposes of determining that individual's eligibility for unemployment benefits must necessarily take into consideration the economic and legal forces at work in the general labor market in which the individual resides." *Sierra* at 723. This means that when evaluating whether a person with a protected disability is able and available to work we must take into account the reasonable accommodation requirements imposed on employers under federal, state, and local laws. *Id.*

Inasmuch as the injury was work-related and the treating physician has released the claimant to return to work, the claimant has established the ability to work. Benefits shall be allowed, effective October 13, 2014.

**DECISION:**

The decision of the representative dated September 15, 2014, reference 01, is modified in favor of the appellant. Claimant is eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits effective October 13, 2014, provided claimant meets all other eligibility requirements.

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Duane L. Golden  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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